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Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"
Third session
3-17 March 2000
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Establishment of the list of speakers for the debate in plenary of the special session of the General Assembly

Note by the Chairperson of the preparatory committee

1. Following consultations with the President of the General Assembly, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" has the honour to bring the following to the attention of the preparatory body.

Organization of the plenary meetings of the special session

2. The special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" would hold 10 plenary meetings over the five-day period, with two meetings per day: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

3. The meeting on Monday morning would hear 13 speakers only, because organizational matters would take up one hour. Subsequently, all morning meetings would feature 18 speakers, and all afternoon meetings 19 speakers. On the afternoon of Friday, in addition to final speakers in the debate, the Assembly would adopt the final document or documents.

Time-limits in the debate in plenary

4. Statements should not exceed seven minutes.

Precedence in the speaking order

5. Heads of State, Vice-Presidents, Crown Princes or Princesses and Heads of Government would be given precedence in the speaking order and would have equal standing as regards the list of speakers. They would be followed by Ministers/Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Chairmen of Delegation/Vice-Ministers and Chairmen of Delegation.

* E/CN.6/2000/PC/1.

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Establishment of the list of speakers for the debate in plenary

6. The list of speakers for the debate in plenary would be established by a drawing of lots. A meeting for this purpose would be convened by the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, on Wednesday, 26 April 2000, in the General Assembly Hall.

7. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services would preside over the meeting and would draw names of Member States from two boxes. The first box (from which names would be drawn first) would contain the names of the Member States that had informed the secretariat of the Assembly, in writing, by 5 p.m. on Monday, 24 April 2000, that their speaker would be a Head of State, Vice-President, Crown Prince/Princess or Head of Government. The second box would contain the names of other Member States.

8. When called, the representative of the Member State would approach the podium, where 10 boxes representing the 10 meetings would be displayed. Each box would contain the numbers corresponding to speaking slots at that meeting. The representative would be asked to draw, from the box representing the preferred meeting, a chip showing the number of the speaking slot, and would then be asked to indicate the level of representation of the speaker, if not already indicated. If at that time a representative was unable to indicate at which level his/her country would be represented, it would be assumed that the representation would be at the Permanent Representative (Chairman of Delegation) level. The result of the drawing of lots and the indicated level of representation of Member States would be recorded by the Secretariat.

9. Should a delegation be absent from the meeting room when the name of the country was called, it would be given the opportunity to select a speaking slot from the box representing the meeting of choice (as availability permitted) following the conclusion of the drawing of lots. This opportunity would be given in the same order in which the Member State's name was initially drawn.

10. Within 10 working days of the meeting the Secretariat would publish the results of the drawing of lots, but rearranged to reflect the precedence outlined above.

11. Should a delegation be unable to attend the meeting and participate in the drawing of lots, it would have the opportunity to select a speaking slot from those remaining by contacting the staff of the secretariat of the General Assembly at any time after 26 April 2000.

Exchanges of speaking slots and changes in the level of representation

12. Exchanges of speaking slots between delegations would be possible and both delegations should inform the staff of the secretariat of the General Assembly in writing of such an intent. In the case of equality of rank, a delegation would move to the exact position of the other delegation. In the case of inequality in rank, a delegation would move to the last position in the appropriate category at the meeting to which it was changing.

13. Should the level of representation of a delegation change from the Head of State, Vice-President, Crown Prince/Princess or Head of Government category to any other category, then the speaker would move, according to the category, to the last position for Member States in the list of speakers for the last plenary meeting.

14. Should the level of representation of delegations other than those mentioned in paragraph 13 above change, the speaker would move to the last position in the appropriate category at the same meeting.

Inclusion of observers in the list of speakers

15. The preparatory committee would recommend to the General Assembly that observers be allowed to make statements in the debate in plenary and that, according to the practice of the Assembly, they take the floor after all Member States have spoken.

16. A number of organizations and entities have received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly.

17. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/142 of 17 December 1999, States members of specialized agencies that are not members of the United Nations may participate in the special session in the capacity of observers.

18. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/142, associate members of the regional

commissions may participate in the special session, subject to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, in the same capacity of observer that applied to their participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women.

19. Observers would be included in the list of speakers for the debate in plenary, on a first-come first-served basis, after the first list of speakers had been issued, by contacting the secretariat of the General Assembly in writing.

20. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998, Palestine would participate in the drawing of lots so that it could be determined at which meeting it would be the last speaker.